



Black & Pink



a family of
LGBTQ
prisoners and
"free world"
LGBTQA allies
who support
each other

December 2011 Newsletter

Inside this
issue:

Meditation in
the Hole 2

"Apathetic
Nation" 3

Transgender Day
of Remembrance

Targeting of
GLBT Inmates in
Pennsylvania 4

Transsexual /
GID Legal Advice 5
&
6

The Other One
Percent 7
&
8

Fire & Smoke:
Bo Brown and
Prison Abolition
Part 4 of 5 9

Addresses 10

Dear Friends,

December 1st is recognized as World AIDS Day. This is one day of the year when people around the globe take a moment to collectively recognize the impact HIV/AIDS has had on our planet. This is a time for people to tell stories about what it means to suffer the stigmatization of an AIDS diagnosis and to celebrate the power of organizing together. It is a moment in the calendar to recognize that the medical industry has failed to prioritize the needs of those most impacted by this virus and honor those who have fought back. It is a moment to talk about how systems of oppression lead to increased rates of transmission in communities of color, poor communities, GLBTQ communities, the global south, and within the confines of the prison system.

It is essential for us to talk about the impact of HIV/AIDS on incarcerated people. One story shared with Human Rights Watch came from a prisoner locked up in Alabama in March of 2009. He told HRW, "The process of entering the system and getting tested for HIV is miserable. Prisoners arrive at Kilby which is the receiving unit, and if you test positive they take you straight to lockup. They tell you you've got AIDS and are going to die. They put you in the hole and now guys are staying 2- 3 months because they are so overcrowded, there are no beds in [designated HIV units] dorm B or C." This person's experience, while horrendous, is not uncommon. There are multiple inappropriate and harmful things happening in this story. Testing must be a choice! No one should ever be forced into medical testing they do not want, not even for sexually transmitted diseases; this is a direct challenge to individual autonomy. Segregating HIV+ people and instilling panic about the prognosis are both violent devaluing of the individual's humanity. People in prison and people living with HIV/AIDS are entitled to respect and dignity, these types of practices are anything but.

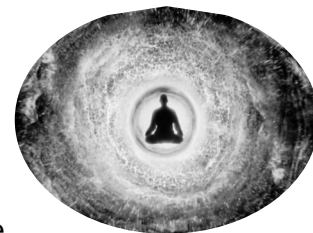
While the systemic violence against people with HIV/AIDS is expansive, there is also incredible resistance. In 1989, prisoners at Bedford Hills women's prison established the AIDS Counseling and Education program (ACE), the nations first prisoner-led HIV/AIDS program. It is without a doubt that prisoners are the best advocates and educators for each other when it comes to HIV/AIDS education. It is other currently incarcerated people who are best able to communicate with prisoners about the realities of harm reduction practices, transmission reduction, support for one another while struggling with the challenges of living with HIV/AIDS, and simply educating one another in a language people can understand. Throughout the country prisoners have been organizing together for care and health while also building political power as people living with HIV/AIDS.

People on the outside have also supported currently and formerly incarcerated people as they work to reduce the rates of HIV/AIDS in prisons. Statistics show that up to 25% of people living with HIV/AIDS in the United States pass through the prison system at some point in their life, that is 1 in 4 people living with HIV/AIDS will be incarcerated at some point in their life. Very, very few prisons around the country permit condoms into the prison and no prisons in the US permit needle exchange programs. Even though all studies prove that condoms and needle exchange could help reduce the rates of HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, and other blood born disease, the punishment industry refuses to acknowledge the real life value of people who are incarcerated. At times people have taken matters into their own hands. In 1992 AIDS activists in Wisconsin rented a plane and dropped condoms into the prison yard of the maximum-security prison in Waupun, Wisconsin, where condoms were considered contraband. It will take a diversity of tactics to support the care and political power of people living with HIV/AIDS in US prisons, we will continue this struggle knowing that once there were no prisons, that day will come again.

In loving struggle,
Jason



Meditation in the Hole



Dear B&P Family,

It seems like almost every month, there's another letter from one of my brothers or sisters who is spending a lengthy time in the Hole (and not the good one). I, too, have spent a great time in the Hole and am there now. I would like to offer some words of encouragement for those of us who are dealing with this sucky experience. I have fortunately made the most of this time by staying busy. It's really not hard to do. At this point I have so much going on that I almost dread the day when I'll have a little freedom and will have to keep up with all this stuff I've gotten started and won't feel like it.

Anyway, one great support has been the fact that it is rare that two days will go by and I don't get any mail. You may think, "It must be nice to have so many friends and family that support you." I don't. I have 2 semi-regular penpals who will sometimes write once a month. I've never met either of these people. I get most of my mail because I am on just about every single mailing list that I know of, and even get letters from some groups I've never heard of as a result.

There are lots of resource guides for prisoners out there which have loads of info for those of us stuck in the Hole. All you have to do is write. And no, I don't have money for stamps, I get a few because I'm indigent and when I'm not in the Hole, I work for 'em.

During one long spell in the Hole, I wrote to a group that takes meditation lessons, and it had changed my life for the better. Now, I roll my eyes at some of the religious people in prison. I know that it's just because of prison that they're doing it. However, I was really mental before and now have personally gotten a great deal out of meditation and it has kept me sane.

I lately wrote a Buddhist group and get regular newsletters from them and I have an advisor that I can write, and get monthly lessons from a Yoga meditation group which are very empowering. I'm also on some Christian mailing lists and get info from them. Now, I'm looking for a Hindu prisoner's support group and I'd like to read about some of their info, if there is one. For the record, I would consider myself a Buddhist/Yoga/Pagan who likes to study all beliefs and take what I like from each and set up my own personal thing. You can get free books from many places- enough to keep you occupied, for sure. All you have to do is write, and it's usually these same groups that have the great resource guides.

What I'm trying to say is, I really hope that those of you who are in the same situation as I am can find a way to use this time to train your mind and be productive and make the most of your time. You can even learn yoga and practice it in your cell! These are prisoner yoga support groups too (both physical yoga and yoga meditation.)

There are way too many groups out there to possibly try to list them all in one letter. Start with the places that offer resource guides, then when you write any other group, ask them if they have their own resource guides. Some good resource guides that'll get you started are:

PARC, POB 70447, Oakland, CA 94612.

Tranzmission, POB 1874, Asheville, NC, 28802.

The Prison Library Project, 915C W. Foothill Blvd, PMB 128, Claremont, CA 91711

Some great resources for meditation to get your mind calm (and you can be any religion and meditate):

White Mtn. Education Assoc., POB 11975, Prescott, AZ 86304

Syda Foundation, POB 99140, Emeryville, CA 94662

Human Kindness Foundation, POB 61619, Durham, NC 27715 (books with meditation tips)

Please keep in mind that if you write these places, it may take 6 months or more for them to write back, especially if lots of people write them at the same time. Please be patient, and remember that these people are doing this for free. If you don't expect to be at the same place for at least a year, then you may not get an answer. You're more likely to get a quicker response if you can afford to send them a stamp.

Y'all...Take care of yourselves, and don't let these a**holes get you down.

Please stay strong, if not for yourself, then do it for me, your Fairy Godmother K.

-Warrior K.

*Editor's note: Also, If you're in AZ, AR, FL, IA, IN, KS, KY, MN, MO, ND, NE, OH, OK, SD, TN or WI write to:
The Midwest Pages to Prisoners Project c/o Boxcar Books and Community Center, Inc. 408 E. 6th St.
Bloomington, IN 47408*

Apathetic Nation

A mirror of truth blinds this apathetic so-called humanity,
Who secretly embraces our crimes of malfunctional-insanity.
A criminal's seeds and deeds our hypocritical society does berate,
For profits, the media-propaganda-machine sponsors a Nation's fear and hate.
Weapons of puritan dogma spread their lies through careful indoctrination,
To youthful and other gullible minds pre-programmed by the selective history of this Nation.

PROPAGANDA
CONTROL THE MEDIA ~ THE MEDIA CONTROLS US

Our Politicians carnival-like specter of a war on drugs and crime,
Not an intelligent clue of any long-term solution given their time.
An old Cold War nemesis, The Iron Curtain, is now deceased and gone,
Oh play the hysteria for a Nation addicted to past & future fears of what's wrong.
Our citizens and politicians then coveted a new enemy of their Nation's criminals within,
They needed Them, Us, for absolution, to escape their own private-secret-sin.

U.S. society doesn't really seek out any transparent-comprehensible-truth,
Like B-movie virus-infected-zombies casting their ill-advised votes in a booth.
Their mantra and banners all say, "Just fix crime now and make it go away,"
Narcissism and knee-jerk solutions pervade in this generation of Me!, Me!, Me!, today.
So political leaders position themselves to lie, scheme and cheat for graft,
Their dirty-deeds self-justified by harsh bills and legislation they draft.



**TAKE A BITE OUT OF
CRIME**®

Through the valleys and hills of doing-time a criminal meets face-to-face their own disgrace,
Sentenced, caged, abused, abandoned and killed in prison we must face.
Prison, an ample breeding-ground of broken-people who took the wrong path,
Sadly once freed, institutionalized prisoner's come-back, "Do The Math!"
Long-term prison sentences and harsh conditions have been engineered for retribution,
Prisons no longer seem to promote rehabilitation as a humane and wise solution.

Yes!, judge a Nation, a society and civilization by their prisoner's keep,
Of our tortured souls, our Last Hope!, they can't touch or reap.
Not surprisingly- but nobody seems to have a real-reliable answer,
They say, "Maybe like human nature it's presently un-curable like cancer."
We, all of us as a Nation, await a Long-Term realistic solution, if any,
Our free-citizens and politicians have their opinions and ideas, there are many.



**I WANT YOU
IN PRISON**

As we wait for this answer a whole-imprisoned-nation of U.S. citizens is lost,
I wonder if this Apathetic-Nation knows and fathoms the potential future cost?
Think hard and deep, "What will the Long-term cost to this Nation be,
If we continue to lock -up people in prison and throw-away-the-key?"
GOD, OUR FATHER, PLEASE HELP this blind apathetic-nation open it's hearts and eyes,
Please hear us, your children in prison, please hear and respond to our cries.

-Woody D., Texas

13th Annual Transgender Day of Remembrance

November 20, 2011



Those who cannot
remember the past
are doomed to repeat it.

<http://www.transgenderdor.org>

~George Santayana

The Transgender Day of Remembrance was set aside to memorialize those who were killed due to anti-transgender hatred or prejudice. Twelve years ago at this time, Boston's LGBT community recoiled in horror at the discovery of the latest victim of transphobic violence. Rita Hester, a popular figure in the local rock 'n roll scene, who also happened to be a transsexual, had been found brutally stabbed to death in her apartment. Like so many killings of gay and transgender persons, the victim was subjected to enough brutality to kill her many times over.



A local community of queer activists, rockers, family, friends and allies -- over 250 of them -- came together and held a speak-out and candlelight vigil in Rita's honor, forming a human stream of light winding its way through Rita's old Allston stomping grounds. One year later, a memorial vigil was held in San Francisco; the following year Boston and a few other cities joined in, and this year hundreds of observances will be held in dozens of countries. 20 people were remembered in 2011.

Targeting of GLBT inmates in PA

Dear Black and Pink,

This is Juicy Woods. I like to put an issue out for Pennsylvania inmates, sisters/brothers/or what you prefer to be called. The state of Pennsylvania and Department of Corrections is getting away with murder. Targeting all GLBT inmates by Z coding the transsexuals and other all out male homosexuals. Because they think it's going to stop sexual intercourse and some people like me the DOC says you're not coming off because of incidents that took place in the county. I have never received a write up for sexual intercourse or sexual activities in the county jail and I been to almost all of them in Pennsylvania. They are targeting us and we all need to stand up and fight and start a class action suit in federal court and stand up for our rights. This is just one of the issues. They harass us each day and get away with it. They stop us saying we're having sex but being on Z code don't stop us from having sex. 1 out of 3 men in the state prison or DOC in Pennsylvania is having sex with a GLBT inmate or their cellie or are messing around on the down low and they still have cellie and the DOC don't care about them, they only care about GLBT inmates all the way out there. In the county I had cellies but here I can't and only reason I get is that I am on the Z Code. Pennsylvania is one of the largest states that got the highest prison population and they claim they don't have room but if they take 50% of the Z codes away from GLBT inmates that don't want Z codes they'll have enough room. It isn't many states that make homosexuals get Z codes, they tell their inmates in other states to deal with it or don't come to jail.

All Pennsylvania state inmates/prisoners/convicts, whatever you call yourself, go to your library in your institutional facility and get a copy of PA 11-2-1 section 5 and see, do you meet the criteria for Z code.

Then get your people to complain because DOC and Pennsylvania is committing a hate crime and violating our constitutional rights. Also write to Hearts on the Wire – P.O. Box 36831 – Philadelphia, PA 19107.

They're fighting this issue and need our help and feed back.
Juicy Vatore W. – Labelle, PA

Transsexual / GID Legal Advice



Dear Black and Pink friends and family,

It's Orphan in Arizona. I've been seeing a lot of submissions regarding grievances, civil rights, health care violations, legal advice from B&P family veterans such as Warrior K and Anastasia and I would like to add my two cents to all the hype. But before I go on I would like to point out that the advice I am about to give is different in some jurisdictions, so look up your state's statutes and do some research for your jurisdiction before you file.

Now, not once has anyone discussed the American's with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA beginning at 42 U.S.C § 12101, is the most important and relevant Federal law and statute for bringing suit for prisoners with disabilities who are not receiving the accommodations or care they require. The ADA is designed to address different issues than 8th Amendment claims. 8th Amendment claims require prisoners to establish (show) deliberate indifference to serious medical needs, Now the ADA requires a prisoner to show s/he is:

A qualified individual with a disability, who was excluded from participation in or denied access to a program or service, and that this denial or discrimination was because of a disability.

I would like to point out a case:

White v. Farrier, 849 F.2d 322 (8th Cir. 1988). Transsexualism/Gender Identity Disorder (GID) has been found to be a serious medical need/disability. Now, here are some definitions the courts use as "legal terms" to help you understand what I have so far discussed.

Disability: A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; has a record of such impairment; or is regarded by others as having such and impairment.

Substantially limits: Determined by considering the extent of disability given reasonable corrective measures, such as glasses or medication, i.e. Hormone treatment/medication.

Now, in contrast with most constitutional claims, under the ADA, discrimination on the basis of a disability DOESN'T have to be intentional to constitute a violation. The above standard, therefore, is affirmative, rather than negative: Under the ADA, persons with disabilities requiring accommodation, treatment, etc., must be so accommodated. This is a much more accessible standard to meet than the standard required under constitutional theories.

Now, counseling services and medical diagnosis and treatment are all ADA activities and accommodations. Now, requests for accommodations. To obtain relief under the ADA, prisoners must request a "modification" of an existing service or structure or policy so as to make it accessible to him/her. Now, numerous requests for treatment will support your ADA claim. So, keep records of everything – letters, your symptoms, your attempts to get treatment, any diagnoses made. I cannot over emphasize this, keep records of everything!!!

Now, courts have held that the full spectrum of remedies are available to successful prisoners under the ADA including compensatory damages (money damages) if you can show discrimination is intentional. But, regarding relief available, some courts have seriously limited relief available in ADA – prison suits, holding any relief in the form of money damages is barred, unless you prove intentional discrimination. Courts have allowed only declaratory or injunctive relief that has "no impact on a state's treasury." Now, what this means, is all money damages and anything that could be construed as having an impact on a state's financial resources is out. Courts have barred this type of relief under an 11th Amendment theory (the 11th Amendment bars suits in federal court against a state unless the state consents to it.)

Would-be ADA claim prisoners should know that an individual is not "qualified" (to sue under the act) if s/he poses a significant risk to others by virtue of her/his disability, and that risk can't be eliminated by reasonable accommodation. In the prison context, the determination whether an individual is qualified will consider the possibility of the proposed accommodation with respect to prison operations. Several courts have agreed that the standard of *Turner v. Safley*, 482 U.S. 78 (1987) superseded on other grounds, applies to determining "qualification" and what modifications in a prison are reasonable: the standard itself asks if the prison has a reasonable basis for its decision, and is deferential to prison "security" and operations considerations. Under ADA Title II generally, a modification is not required if it involves a "fundamental alteration" in the program, service or structure.

Now, inadequate mental health treatment is actionable under the 8th Amendment "deliberate indifference" standard. In addition, rights related to mental health treatment may be found within 14th Amendment due process protection and affirmative rights to treatment as provided under the ADA. For example, prisoners with psychiatric disorders (ie GID/Transsexualism) have the right to treatment by qualified staff. Now, transsexualism has been found to require some forms of accommodation as a serious medical need. Psychiatric disorders as a result of GID are considered serious medical needs. However hormone therapy may or may not be considered serious medical need depending on the court circuit.

Continued on Page 6:



Continued from Page 5: There are different ways to bring your case to court.

Singular, statutory claims, like the ADA: Some courts have decided the ADA does not require administrative exhaustion, despite the PLRA (Prison Litigation Reform Act). What this means is some courts do not require you to go through your grievance process if your claim is an ADA only claim. It's essential, then, that you carefully research the requirements in your particular Federal jurisdiction. When in doubt, it's better to be cautious and exhaust your administrative remedies (grievance process).

Multiple claims (for example, an ADA and an 8th Amendment claim): If your suit includes both an ADA and a federal constitutional claim, you will need to go all the way and exhaust your grievance process.

If you do not properly exhaust administrative remedies regarding a federal constitutional claim, as required by the PLRA, all claims may potentially be dismissed, even those that may not require exhaustion if presented alone. The relationship between the ADA and PLRA is this, and other respects have yet to be worked out in all aspects with the courts.

To make an 8th Amendment claim regarding access to gender-affirming care, you will need to prove that you have what is called "Gender Identity Disorder" (GID), which is a condition recognized by the American Psychiatric Association (APA). Courts sometimes refer to GID as "transsexualism." As of 2010 the APA is considering making changes to the way GID is diagnosed. Among other changes, they may rename the condition "Gender Incongruence" or (GI). Currently, though, the APA describes GID as "persistent cross-gender identification" with "clinically significant distress or impairment of functioning." "Identification" is about how you see yourself in terms of gender. "Distress" can mean that you have feelings of sadness, depression, anxiety, disconnect, or self hatred about your body and gender. "Impairment" can mean that you have a hard time doing everyday activities relating to other people, getting a job, or taking care of your body because of your feelings about your gender and body. A number of courts have said that GID is a "serious medical need."

Some transgender people have had a hard time proving that they have GID if they have not gotten a formal diagnosis. One case like this is *Cnoco v. Moritsugn*, 222 F.3d 99 (2d Cir. 2000). Of course, it can be hard to get a formal diagnosis if your prison will not let you get evaluated by anyone qualified to diagnose you. You may be able to get a court order that you be evaluated for GID in the course of a lawsuit. The ADA is a perfect way to go about this in court so make sure to go back and reread and reread to understand what to do. Now you can argue that prisons are not allowed to ignore signs that prisoners have a serious medical need and fail to diagnose these conditions to avoid their duty to provide medical care/treatment/qualified personnel. To show that you need evaluation and treatment for GID, you should include in your complaint facts about how you feel about your gender and how long you have felt that way, the ways that not being able to get treatment have affected you, any attempts you may have made to live and appear as the gender you identify with, and any past treatment you may have had, such as hormones or surgery. Now to put out some helpful case law that you can use for research and reference:

Phillips v. Michigan Dept. of Corrections, 731 F.Supp.792 (W.D.Mich.1990) "A transgender woman received estrogen for years before prison and sued over the Department's refusal to allow her to continue taking estrogen, the court took the prison doctor to task for intentionally denying necessary medical care. Phillips received a preliminary injunction and the prison was ordered to provide Phillips with estrogen."

Fields v. Smith, 712 F.Supp.2nd 830 (E.D.Wisc.2010), "the court found a state law unconstitutional because it barred funding of hormone therapy without considering the prisoner's individual medical condition."

South v. Gomez, No.99-15976, 2000 U.S. App. LEXIS 3200 (9th Cir. 200) "South sued prison officials after they stopped her female hormone therapy. The guards asked the court to dismiss South's claim on the basis of qualified immunity. The prison officials argued that even if there is a right to hormone therapy that right is not 'clearly established' because the court has never ruled on it before. The ninth court refused to dismiss South's case, and explained that the defendants were being too specific. The right at issue is the general standard under the 8th Amendment: the right not to have prison officials act with deliberate indifference to a serious medical need." Note: "This is a very good case that you may want to rely on if the officials you sue ask the court to dismiss on qualified immunity."

One last thing for those preparing to do any lawsuit, write to the following address and request: "The Jailhouse Lawyers Handbook," which is a 150 page manual/resource for prisoners who wish to file a lawsuit. It also contains limited general information about the US legal system. It's FREE to any and all prisoners who request it. It contains a lot more information relating to transgender issues in prison. I give it a 20 out of 10, the information is really good, it will be a very good tool for anyone interested in the civil rights of prisoners. Put it this way, if every Black and Pink friends and family had one of these handbooks the court system would fail. I think it would bring up the resistance by at least 95% and bring us closer to our goal of achieving full recognition of the civil rights of all LGBTQ people and prison abolition. Here is the address for the above handbook. Request the 5th Edition 2010, most updated: The Center for Constitutional Rights, 666 Broadway, 7th Floor, NY, NY 10012
In Love and solidarity,
Orphan (maximum security, Arizona)

The Other One Percent

By Isaac Lev Szmonko and Isaac Ontiveros, members of the Oakland Chapter of Critical Resistance, a national grassroots organization working to abolish the prison industrial complex.



On the morning of October 25, police from nearly twenty law enforcement agencies descended upon the Occupy Oakland encampment located outside city hall. They removed its occupants using chemical weapons, and arrested nearly 100 people before destroying the encampment. The mayor of Oakland lauded the police raid while SWAT and riot police occupied the city. Workers had to show ID to get to their jobs. Later that evening over a thousand people marched through the streets to protest the morning's police action and attempted to retake the plaza. Images circulated around the world showed police repeatedly using chemical weapons, rubber bullets, and flash grenades against the march. The crowd only seemed to swell. The next night, thousand retook to the street, overcame the plaza and during a general assembly, reached consensus to organize a general strike on November 2nd.

While October 25th's violence was a grim if not surprising reminder of how those in power perpetuate, manage, and respond to social and economic crisis, so too is it a reminder of the adage, "repression breeds resistance". As people working to abolish the prison industrial complex (PIC), we are eager to relate to the dynamism of the occupations and to act at the intersections of economic and social devastation, state violence, and people's resistance. We take up the call of our comrades from Cairo to "let the boundaries of [our] occupations grow" and to "build larger and larger networks."

Over the past two months, thousands of people have been thinking about, talking about and mobilizing around gross inequity between the 1% and the 99%. The last thirty years has led to unprecedented concentration of wealth and power in the hands of the 1% as well as the creation of another 1%: the 1 in 100 people currently locked in US prisons and jails. Examining the connections between these two polarized ends of the US economy helps us understand why resistance to the PIC points a way forward toward building participatory and democratic economies centered on strong, stable, and healthy national, regional, and local communities.

Between 1979 and 2007, the nation's highest earners saw their household income triple, while during the same period the prison population increased from 500,000 to 2.3 million, not including juvenile and immigrant detentions. In 2011, with 1% of the US population controlling 40% of the wealth, 7.2 million adults — or 3.1% of the population, mostly poor and of color—are under correctional supervision (probation, parole, jail, or prison). Federal, state, and local budgets for imprisonment, surveillance, and policing have exploded while "austerity" budgets driven by the elite 1% have forced brutal cuts with the claims that governments cannot afford to fund education, healthcare, housing, transportation, infrastructure, community centers, and other life-affirming projects. How did the rich get so rich, and poor get so arrested?

The rise of law and order regimes made notorious by Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan (and pushed forward by every administration following) can be seen as a response to liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s inside and outside the US, the strength of unions, and the end to the post-war economic expansion. The rise of the post-war PIC has played an integral role in broader plans to free markets from their regulatory, geographic, and political constraints — leading to deregulation, outsourcing, union-busting, mechanization, privatization and elimination of social goods and services, and wage and benefit reductions now familiarly recognized as neoliberalism.

All workers are disciplined and punished by these economic programs, making the call of the 99% resonate with the majority of the population who are deeply impacted by unemployment, foreclosures, social service and education cuts, and steeply mounting debt. The most vulnerable — poor people, people of color, immigrants, queer and gender non-conforming people, and people with disabilities — have also been targeted for further coercion, containment, and control by policing and imprisonment and legalized discrimination against formerly imprisoned people. Currently, sixty-five million people have criminal records and are barred from most employment, as well as public housing and food assistance. Eleven million undocumented workers are targeted for wage theft, harassment, raids, detentions and deportations while often working for less than minimum wage in unsafe conditions. *Continued on Page 8*

Continued from Page 7:

Of those who are paid to work, an increasing number are forced to work for some aspect of the military and prison industrial complexes. As the right wing offensive attacks public sector unions from teachers to postal workers — and vital social services get sacrificed in the name of austerity and artificial budget crises — police, prison, and military budgets are the last to be cut. In this economic context, police crackdowns on the Occupy encampments mirror the rise and militarization of policing that the most marginalized sections of the 99% have lived through and resisted for generations. Police attacks, the mass arrest of protestors, and the threat and reality of police-led evictions have galvanized scores of supporters from across the country to move from passive to active dissent. In the face of this repression, new social solidarities are being formed and solidified as people recognize how policing is used to protect and perpetuate the violent economic and social relationships that have brought thousands of people into the streets.

In Oakland, these solidarities have started to become more formal, as Occupy Oakland's General Assembly voiced support for the California Prisoner Hunger Strikers, declared opposition to gang injunctions and youth curfews in solidarity with the local Stop the Injunctions Coalition, and held a rally and march against police violence. This resistance draws from the memory and experience of the last several years of protests against police brutality that were sparked by the police murder of Oscar Grant III, as well as the preceding history made by such organizations as the Black Panther Party. With no small amount of contradiction to work through, those whose race, class, and gender status have placed them at less oppressive ends of the PIC have opportunities to stand alongside those who experience the onslaught of policing and imprisonment all day, every day.



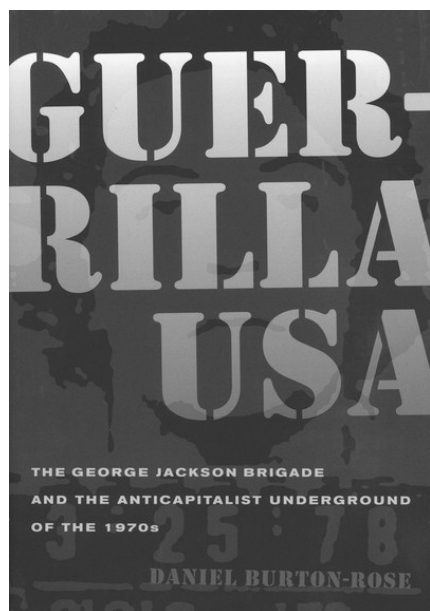
Police suppressed the Occupy protests amidst one of the worst budget crises in Oakland history. The very day after the raid, five schools were closed to save the city \$2 million, while estimates at the cost of policing the night of the crackdown are around the same amount. Unemployment in Oakland is at least twice the national average and Black residents, especially hard hit, are leaving the city at alarming rates. At the same time nearly half the city's budget goes toward policing. In Oakland and across the country, neighborhoods hit hardest by policing through gang injunctions, ICE raids, DEA invasions, and police murder are the same hit hardest by budget cuts and economic inequity. But those hit hardest often fight hardest.

Amplifying the voices and supporting the leadership of the millions of people living under the PIC is one crucial way to keep building the strength of the occupy movement. Can we incorporate work by former prisoners to ban the box that marks one as a convicted felon on employment applications by elaborating employment demands coming from the occupations? If we use this moment to pull organized labor to the left, can we call on unions to advocate for the millions of potential workers denied access to work because of felony convictions and to take a stand against prison and jail construction that is bleeding state economies? When we celebrate international solidarity with current and historic uprisings, can we include the uprising of thousands of prisoners who went on work strikes throughout the Georgia prison system last winter, and the thousands who went on hunger strike throughout the California system this past July and September simultaneously with a hunger strike by thousands of Palestinian political prisoners held in Israeli prisons? Can we imagine what it would look like for imprisoned people to participate in General Assemblies? How will we include the voices of communities for which police violence and murder is a daily occurrence that rarely makes the headlines?

As the 1% continues to unleash its police forces on encampments across the country, many people will be politically ignited for the first time. Others will mark this moment as a continuation of decades of struggle. The PIC is central to the unequal distribution of resources and the systematic denial of life chances. Its violence protects oppressive economic relationships, steals resources that make communities strong, and quells dissent. But even in social and economic crisis, opportunities abound. This is a moment when our work can have a profound impact in dismantling the forces that keep us down, making fundamental changes in the balance of power, and building the new and better world we want and need.



Fire & Smoke: Bo Brown and Prison Abolition, Part 4 of 5



The Brigade was united primarily around the “determination to fight capitalism—with force of arms—here and now.”(30) But they also had eight other uniting principles concerning the fight against capitalism and for the liberation of all people. Amongst these was the recognition that sexism is one of the “fundamental bulwarks of all class society.”(31) This sentiment follows a long tradition of revolutionary feminism. In her 1935 essay “Women and Communism”, Rebecca Pitts writes that the “subjection of women was necessary to early capitalism” and that the relative freedom later granted to women was done only for profit, just as the emancipation of slaves was allowed only when it was to be profitable(32). And, just as emancipation did not fully free blacks, opening the job market, or a portion of it, did not free women. There was still much interest, profit driven or otherwise, in maintaining a racial and sexual hierarchy. Brown rounds out the analysis about the relationship between patriarchy and capitalism saying: “If you change the way you treat women and children, then you have to have basic change in society.”(33) Male dominance is so fundamentally woven into the fabric of society that removing it necessitates a revolutionary restructuring of society.

Over the next three years, the Brigade executed numerous political bombings and banks robberies to fund their operations. In August, 1975, the Brigade bombed the Washington offices of the FBI and Bureau of Indian Affairs in response to the attacks against the American Indian Movement on the Rosebud and Pine Ridge reservations in South Dakota. On New Years Eve, 1976, the Brigade bombed and completely destroyed the power substation that provided electricity to a wealthy neighborhood in Seattle to support striking City Light utility workers. The striking workers refused to repair the station, and threatened to picket the site to make sure scabs could not repair it(34). Bo Brown sees this act as an example of mass understanding, if not support, for what the Brigade was doing. She notes that informal networks sprung up to distribute Brigade communiques all over the city, mentioning that they could even sometimes be found at the same Safeway stores that were bombed(35). Brown regards a bombing in support of striking prisoners at Walla Walla as a prime example of the effectiveness of what the Brigade was doing. After over forty days of striking, all the coverage by the mass media never included the voice of any of the prisoners at Walla Walla. So, the Brigade bombed Rainer National Bank, which had close financial ties to the Seattle Times, demanding fair coverage of the prisoners’ strike. The next day, the Times interviewed a prisoner at Walla Walla and the prison’s conditions were “revealed to be so brutal and medieval” that the prison’s veteran warden as well as director of the Department of Corrections were both fired.(36)

Brown’s specialty was bank robberies, or “expropriations”, which were the Brigades prime source of funds. Her butch style, along with some costumes, threw off law enforcement, which spent several years looking for a man(37). Nevertheless, in 1977, Brown was captured by authorities and sentenced to federal prison for several armed robberies. She spent her first year in a Maximum Security Unit (MSU) in Alderson, West Virginia. The MSU was “a prison with in a prison,”(38) separated from the rest of the facility with razor wire and fences. It was where the “most dangerous women in the country” were sent, including Brown and fellow revolutionary and Black Liberation Army member Assata Shakur(39).

(30, 31, 34) *The Power of the People is the Force of Life: Political Statement of the George Jackson Brigade*. (Montreal: Abraham Guillen Press, 2002) 33-44.

(32) Rebecca Pitts, “Women and Communism.” in *Writing Red* eds. Charlotte Nekola and Paula Rabinowitz. (New York: The Feminist Press, 1987), 318-319.

(33, 35, 38) Brown, interview.

(36) Daniel Burton-Rose, “Guerrillas in Our Midst.” *Lip Magazine* 15 February 1999, http://www.lipmagazine.org/articles/featrose_9.htm [cited April 26 2007].

(37) Scott Winn, “Talkin’ About a Revolution” *Real Change* <http://www.realchangenews.org/pastarticles/interviews/fea.bo.html> [cited April 26 2007].

(39) Assata Shakur, *Assata: An Autobiography*. (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 1987), 253-254.

Newsletter Subscriptions (start or stop)

Newsletter Submissions

Request Free "Outside" Pen-Pal Ad Form

"Prisoner 2 Prisoner" Pen-Pal Listing
(for prisoners with full permission only)

Ideas for Black & Pink and Feedback

Request Erotica

Request Religious Support

Volunteer! (Send us thank you cards to
send to donors or stamps as a donation!)

Advocacy Request (Details about your situa-
tion, how a group of people making calls or
writing letters can help)

Black and *Pink*– Newsletter Subscriptions

Black and *Pink*– Newsletter Submissions

Black and *Pink*– Pen Pal

Black and *Pink*– P2P

Black and *Pink*– Developing Leadership

Black and *Pink*– Erotica
New September 2011

Black and *Pink*– Religion
New September 2011

Black and *Pink*– Volunteer
New October 2011

Black and *Pink*– Advocacy
New October 2011

Write to B&P!

Black and *Pink*—[Insert Topic from Above]
c/o Community Church of Boston
565 Boylston Street
Boston, MA 02116

Write to B&P Art!

****New Address as of January 2011!****

Black & Pink Art c/o Reed Miller
200 Amory Street
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

LEGAL: Consider writing to Lambda Legal for support or referrals with legal issues that you are having. "Lambda Legal is a national organization committed to achieving full recognition of the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people and those with HIV through impact litigation, education and public policy work."

Lambda Legal, National Office 120 Wall Street, Suite 1500, New York, NY 10005, 212-809-8585

Another resource to turn to, if you can afford the subscription (\$24 yearly, payable with new stamps), is Prison Legal News. This resource was co-started by a former gay prisoner, Ed Mead, though now it is run by Paul Wright. You can reach them by writing to: **Prison Legal News, P.O. Box 2420, West Brattleboro, VT 05303**

SURVIVORS: Just Detention International provides support for prisoners who are survivors of sexual abuse. Write them at the legal address below for a packet. Each packet includes an introductory letter, a list of local resources, fact sheets, publications about recovery from sexual abuse, and a letter of hope from another survivor.
Ms. Chris Daley, Esq., 3325 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 340, Los Angeles, CA 90010

